

CONTOOCCOOK BRIDGE
Hopkinton, New Hampshire
Contoocook,

HABS NH-21

HABS
N.H.
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PHOTOGRAPHS AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of New Hampshire

Historic American Buildings Survey
Eugene W. Clark, Deputy Officer
Durham, New Hampshire

COVERED
CONTOOCOOK BRIDGE
CONTOOCOOK
(Hopkinton) Merrimack County, New Hampshire

<u>Late Owner</u>	Town of Hopkinton
<u>Date of Erection</u>	1853
<u>Architect</u>	Unknown
<u>Builder</u>	Unknown (see next page)
<u>Present Condition</u>	Destroyed
<u>Materials of Construction</u>	Stone abutments Wood Lattice No Arch
<u>Other Existing Records</u>	Life and Times of Hopkinton by C. C. Lord Concord Daily Monitor May 11, 1935

COVERED BRIDGE

Contoocook, N. H.

Removed May, 1935

Article in the Concord Daily Monitor, May 11, 1935
No copies available, the following is copied at the
Monitor Office and is excerpts from the entire
article which deals with the old and the new bridge
which is to be constructed.

"According to instructions for constructing the
covered structure - "each man that worked on the great
bridge should have one gill of rum a day."

"Long memored residents of Contoocook who de-
clare that the old bridge never needed any subsequent
repairs, relate some interesting events concerning
its history. Until 25 years ago they say, towns
folks, caught in the rain, used to hitch their teams
in the bridge until the storm blew over. During a
particularly "bad one" the bridge would be lined from
end to end with teams. Horses could dodge in and
around them but when automobiles appeared there was
trouble. The selectmen were forced to put up a
sign "all persons are forbidden to hitch horses in
the bridge." One local man said the town derrick
was formerly kept in it. A heavy machine, he re-
told how ten men had to "hist" it up in order to tie
it to the side for shelter.

Though the ancient bridge rumbles and quivers
under the weight of passing cars, Highway experts
believe it would still stand passenger automobiles
for many years, but shake their heads when it comes
to big trucks. Inside the structure, signs of its
age are reflected in cobwebbed joints, long illeg-
ible advertisements and planks worn smooth by count-
less vehicles.

Though the bridge about to be destroyed must
be sacrificed to meet more exacting service, it
has stood up under all conveyances and weather with
a durability that does credit to its builders,
Dutton Woods and Samuel Patterson, both former
Concord residents. The original shingles measuring

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four feet in length lasted for approximately 57 years. The first metal ones had to be replaced after 15 years, townsmen say. As far as is known, it was only necessary to replank the bridge twice in 47 years and the only substantial repairs were done after the big fire of 1900 that burned away part of the roof.

COVERED BRIDGE

CONTOOCCOOK, N. H.

Life and Times of Hopkinton, N. H.

C. C. Lord

Copies at Contoocook and in the Historical Society
at Concord

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1852

The town voted to rebuild Rowells bridge at West Hopkinton, of wood, with stone abutments, and the selectmen were instructed to make it of such model as they deemed for the interest of the town, and locate the same accordingly. The selectmen were also instructed to build a wooden suspension bridge over the river at Contoocook, the same to rest on two stone abutments raised to a sufficient height to allow water to pass at ordinary freshets, the manner of covering the same to be left to the discretion of the selectmen. The matter of rebuilding Tylers bridge was left to the discretion of the selectmen, who were authorized to employ suitable persons to convey foot passengers across the river at Tylers and Smileys, the latter being at West Hopkinton. The selectmen were authorized to hire a sum not exceeding \$5000.00 at six percent; for the purpose of building and repairing bridges in town. A part of this action resulted from the great freshet of the spring of 1852, and which carried off Rowells bridge and also the bridge on the new Henniker Road, so called, of which we shall say more hereafter.

On the 8th day of the next July, the selectmen were instructed "to build a new wooden bridge at Contoocookville without a roof" whatever that may have meant, and sell the work to the lowest bidder.

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On the 21st day of March, the selectmen were instructed to build a covered bridge across the river at Contoocook, like or similar to the one built at West Hopkinton the year previous except that it was to be with or without an arch, according to the discretion of the selectmen, and the abutments were to be raised sufficiently to allow water to pass in

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the greatest freshets, and the structure was to be built that season.

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Reference that the first bridge was built in 1779 and located near Lieut. Benjamin Thurber's house.

Prepared by E. H. Clark, District Officer, December 1937

reviewed June 20, 1938 JPV,